

**inside:
what is
anarchism?**

**Tino Rangatiratanga
and
capitalism**

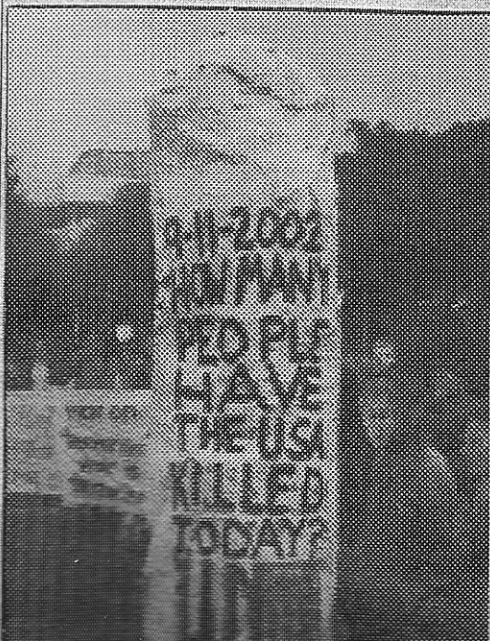
**war is
good business**



**MAKE THIS PLEDGE:
WAR IS PEACE.
SLAVERY IS FREEDOM.
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH.**



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nz anarchist/libertarian socialist contacts

note: The Thrall collective does not necessarily endorse the views of the groups listed below.

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The Freedom Shop 272 Cuba St.

Wellington. Current hours: 12-4pm Tues to Fri, 12-3pm Sat. e-mail: fshop@mad.scientist.com, PO Box 9263, Te Aro, Wellington.

Wildcat (formerly Libertarian Communists), c/- PO Box 6387, Te Aro, Wellington, e-mail: wildcat@clerk.com. Wildcat holds public discussions every month at the Peace & Environment Centre, Trades Hall, 126 Vivian St, Wgtn. Contact them for further details.

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idiotorial

Welcome to another issue of Thrall. Unfortunately, this may be our last issue for a wee while, as work commitments have reduced the time we have for producing the magazine. We will endeavour to bring out the next issue in about 6 months or so. Thanks very much to our supporters for their contributions. This issue is a "what is anarchism?" special. We have a definition of anarchism that was published by MP Nandor Tanczos (!), we publish the aims of two local anarchist groups in Aotearoa because they

are good summaries of anarchism, and we hope that other anarchists just might be encouraged to use them as a starting point to form new anarchist groups. We also publish an article outlining the basics of anarchist communism. I think a "what is anarchism?" special is needed because while I find that many anarchists today are good activists, their knowledge of anarchist theory leaves something to be desired, and as such their practice can suffer as a result.

— Toby of Thrall.

pga aotearoa convergence

People's Global Action (PGA) Aotearoa are holding a conference in Wellington on 8-10 Nov at the Student Union Building, Victoria University, Kelburn Parade. PGA is an international, decentralised anti-capitalist network (see the last Thrall for a history and analysis of PGA). The PGA Aotearoa convergence is hosted by Te Mana Akonga and Ngai Tauri, as well as Wellington collectives and groups (Aotearoa Educators, Windymedia, Anti-Bypass Action, and Committee for the Establishment of Civilisation). The theme of this convergence is strategy: how do we link up and fight capitalism, globalisation and so on better? The timetable is flexible and may be changed on the day according to interest in the various streams etc.

TIMETABLE

FRIDAY Nov 8: 7pm – A Welcome & introduction to PGA.

SATURDAY Nov 9: 10.30am – There will be four concurrent strategic sessions: Tino Rangatiratanga (indigenous only); Indymedia Aotearoa (independent, non-corporate media); Anti-Privatisations (including anti-water privatisation, and anti-motorway struggles); and Anti-Militarism (including networking against the 'war on terrorism').

1pm – Lunch (koha/donation)

2pm to 5pm – three concurrent sessions: Tino Rangatiratanga (indigenous and non-indigenous); Indymedia; a discussion on Constructive alternatives to capitalism. There will also be a shorter ideas sharing workshop on Positive campaigns and activism.

SUNDAY Nov 10: 10.30 am – Plenary session in which there will be a talk about how the PGA network operates overseas.

2pm – Building a PGA network in Aotearoa and throughout Pacifica.

FURTHER INFO:

PGA Pacifica: Aotearoa Educators, PO Box 6387, Wellington, or through the Tino Rangatiratanga list: tino-rangatiratanga@yahoo.com See also www.agp.org or visit the convergence website at http://aotearoa.wellington.net.nz/mayday/converge.htm

wellington bypass delayed

The Wellington inner-city 'bypass' has been delayed by a court case against the Historic Places Trust (HPT) decision to allow removal and destruction of historic buildings along the bypass route. The final few days of the court case will be heard most probably at the beginning of next year. The court case represents the final legal hurdle that Transit, the government roading body, has to pass before building the road and in the process destroy a inner-city community. Thus Aotearoa's only anarchist bookstore, which is in the path of the bypass, is still standing.

Anti-Bypass Action (ABA) is the direct action anti-gentrification wing of the anti-bypass movement. The other wing of the movement is represented by the lobby group Campaign for a Better City (CBC), which

against the HPT, sees direct action as a last resort, and is suspicious of confrontational direct action against the bypass.

On the Wellington anarchist scene, the Freedom Shop is doing well with a good turnover and a high number of volunteers working in the shop. The CEC, which I think represents a loose and vague "synthesis" anarchist grouping of lifestyle anarchists, primitivists and liberal anarchists, has gone into recess but still has an office in Trades Hall. A new anarchist group called Wildcat has been formed out of the Libertarian Communist discussion group. Wildcat is an attempt to establish a well-organised, coherent and productive anarchist communist organisation (the aims of Wildcat are published on page 10). It was felt by some that discussion by itself was not enough in itself and the group needed to move into the

war is big business

Here we go again, the US state terrorist elite threatening to spill more blood for oil profits, this time in Iraq. The aim of the US war effort is not the liberation of the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein, but the overthrow of Saddam and his replacement by another vicious US puppet regime. They kept Saddam in power for many years, and only now do they want to remove him. This will guarantee them cheap oil supplies. An overthrow of Saddam by the Americans will not benefit the Iraqi masses. In the end, only a full-blown social revolution can achieve that. If such a revolution happened, the US and its allies would do their utmost to destroy it.

The Labour government appears to not as gun-ho as Howard in Australia and Blair in the UK, but PM Clark and foreign minister Phil Goff have agreed to military action against Iraq if it's under a UN mandate. But war should be rejected whether the US chooses to try and get UN support or not. The real terrorist threat to the world at the moment comes from the US state, not from Saddam Hussein.

But at the same time, the US may have committed a major miscalculation with the launch of anti-war movements throughout the world that may lead to greater radicalisation and the realisation that capitalism is the root of war. There have been demonstrations on the international day of action on Sep 28 in London of up to 400,000 and 100,000 in Rome. In Aotearoa there were Sep 28 anti-war protests in Wellington, Dunedin, Napier and Auckland, which had the largest turnout of somewhere between 1000-3000 people. Further protests have been held on Oct 26.

Holding rallies is very important, but not enough by themselves. If we want to hinder the war effort and eventually bring it grinding to a halt, then we must – when practical and possible – escalate actions on the street: direct action against US military bases in Aotearoa, boycotts, workers blocking transportation of war materials, and anti-war strikes will all raise the political temperature and push the anti-war movement forward.

main source: Anarchist Federation's *resistance* 42 (Oct. 2002).



**Speaker at the Wellington
Sep. 28 anti-war rally.**

what is war on iraq really about?

Why does the US state call for war on Iraq? Bush calls Saddam Hussein, dictator of a country whose army was annihilated in four days by the U.S. in 1991, a major threat, but refuses to present evidence that Iraq has any "weapons of mass destruction" or the means to deliver them. Bush calls Hussein a thug who used poisoned gas against Iran and his own people, but neglects to mention that Hussein was an ally of the U.S. at the time (1988) and had U.S. support for his actions. Besides, the U.S. has never been shy about supporting thugs and dictators. Why would the U.S. government invent reasons for a war in which many thousands of Iraqis may die?

THE LURE OF OIL

Greed is the most obvious motivating factor. Iraq sits atop 112 billion barrels of oil, the second largest reserves in the world. U.S. oil companies have been cut out of exploiting Iraqi oil since 1990. According to the Washington Post, "A U.S. ouster of Hussein could result in a bonanza for American oil companies long banished from Iraq." The State Department is already using rights to Iraqi oil as bargaining chips to win endorsement of U.S. military action from UN Security Council members.)

the greed of oil companies. War is the next, most dangerous step in a long term capitalist strategy of social control. In the last few years a world anti-capitalist movement has burst onto the stage, with mass demonstrations against the World Trade Organisation, general strikes in Italy and Spain, factory occupations and uprisings in Argentina, widespread strikes in Uruguay, historic labour upheavals in China. Millions are questioning capitalism worldwide. While capitalism is not under threat of destruction by these movements, war with Iraq is still an enormous diversion from these struggles. War is the ultimate tool for whipping working class people into line. When threatened by a rising international labour movement in the early 1900s, governments set worker against worker in WWI. This war is aimed at all working people, to divide and intimidate us with U.S. military strength. In fact the strategy of endless war abroad and the curtailment of freedoms at home as with the recent Terrorism Suppression Bill are signs of paranoia by a ruling elite convinced that it cannot continue to rule without taking extreme measures.

NO WAR BUT THE CLASS WAR

There is only one war that working people should fight: not against workers of other lands but against dictators everywhere.

voter turnout lower, voter disillusionment

higher

Voter turnout for the 2002 general election which returned a right wing Labour government (in coalition with Christian right-wingers this time) was the lowest in the 45 years since statistics have been kept. Voter turnout was at 77% of people who enrolled to vote – and around 10% of the eligible population didn't bother to do that. This was down from 85% in the previous election.

Turnouts since 1984:

1984	93.7%
1987	89.1
1990	85.2
1993	85.2
1996	88.3
1999	84.8
2002	77.0

This decrease in voter turnout is part of a worldwide trend in "advanced" capitalist countries. In the USA, 51% voted in the presidential election of 2000. In Britain, turnout for the 2001 election fell below 60% for the first time since WWI. In Ireland only 63% voted in this year's election. Voter turnout in Aotearoa is thus still comparatively high.

Does the low and lowering turnout give us hope for a radical refusal of mainstream politics? Some anarchists seem to think so. Relatively high voter abstention does indicate at least some mass potential for a radical refusal of capitalism and the state. And it seems much of this disillusionment comes from the working class, particularly those at the bottom of the heap, beneficiaries, young workers and Maori (turnout on the Maori electoral roll was down from 71% in 1999 to 54% in 2002). Thus some anarchists can claim it indicates there is widespread voter disillusionment with all political parties, and shows that many working class people – contrary to the elitist beliefs of some Leninist groups on the far left – can easily see through all the lies of capitalist politicians & have come to the conclusion that all political parties in this day and age are basically the same, except for a few largely cosmetic differences.

Yet we should be too heartened about this abstention. Lower voter turnout also indicates apathy, passivity, and a general disengagement with politics – both radical and conservative. It indicates a negative mood, and does not necessarily mean people think that a positive alternative to capitalism, authority and the state is possible or viable.

unites ordinary people here and in other lands to build a truly humane and democratic classless and stateless society.

source: edited version of a New D.

What is anarchist communism?

What? Anarchist Communism? Surely that's a contradiction in terms. Doesn't communism mean a draconian police state, and anarchism the destruction of the state? Surely then the two are incompatible? Well, this article argues the opposite. A stateless and voluntary form of communism is an essential complement to anarchism. I believe anarchism is impossible without it.

From my experience in anarchist circles in Aotearoa all too often many anarchists seem to be stuck in a simplistic notion that anarchism is just something to do with forming small collectives of friends (affinity groups) who have occasional meetings

alienation, poverty and misery that created among workers and peasants; and the rise of an increasingly powerful and centralised state, which overall served the interests of the boss or capitalist class. Anarchist communism grew out of the anarchist collectivist wing of the First International Workingmen's [sic] Association, a wing which was expelled from the International by Karl Marx and his supporters.

Peter Kropotkin, perhaps the most influential anarchist communist theoretician, claimed that the real origin of anarchism was in the "creative, constructive activity of the masses". He contended "Anarchism originated among

Thus we see that anarchist communism cannot be viewed as a nice idea detached from the struggles of the oppressed. The fortunes of anarchist communism are intimately related with developments in the class struggle. Anarchist communists learnt from the content and form of the struggles of the oppressed. Thus we tend to find that following the 1871 Paris Commune, anarchist communists adopted the "commune" as their model of a future classless and stateless society; and after the Russian revolution of 1917 the workers' council.

(2) POLITICS: FREE ASSOCIATION OR ANARCHISM

Anarchist communism is composed of two aspects: anarchism and communism. To look at anarchism first, anarchism is the continual forming and reforming of non-hierarchical voluntary groups, of varying sizes, to meet peoples needs. In Kropotkin's words, anarchism "seeks the most complete development of individuality combined with the highest development of voluntary association in all its aspects, in all possible degrees, for all imaginable aims; [they would] constantly assume new forms which answer best to the multiple aspirations of all."

So anarchism is the continual prevention of the re-establishment of any authority, any power, any State; and full and complete freedom for the individual who, freely and driven by his or her needs alone, freely bands together with other individuals into a group; then the freedom of development for the group which federates with others within the neighbourhood; then freedom of development for communities which federate within the region and so on; until a world without borders is established.

So in place of authoritarian organisations, non-authoritarian organisations would be formed by people themselves for the purposes of self-help and mutual aid. The tendency to this free association even exists in modern capitalist society – in the form of people supporting strikes and other forms of working class solidarity, international railway and postal networks, even the Red Cross and lifeboat associations. These voluntary associations are limited and distorted by capitalism; however, they give us a glimpse of what free agreement has in store for us if we establish a stateless society in the future.

(3) ECONOMICS: FREE COMMUNISM



where everybody sits in circles and tries to be non-authoritarian. If pressed, most of these anarchists will say anarchism is something to do with getting rid of authority and respecting individual liberty. I think we need to transcend this crude anarchist theory and practice – and here anarchist communism is very useful. Anarchist communism gets beyond the liberal notions outlined above that anarchism is a nice idea of individual liberty, an idea which is almost inevitably detached from the struggle of the oppressed. So the purpose of this article is to outline the basics, in very broad brush strokes, of anarchist communism and in particular non-market anarchist communism to an audience unfamiliar with this type of anarchism. Then it offers some brief observations on the potential for an updated anarchist communism today.

(1) ORIGINS

Anarchist communism did not appear until the mid 1870s in Europe. It arose against

the people, and it will preserve is vitality and creative force so long only as it remains a movement of the people." The Dielo Trouda (Workers' Cause) group of exiled Russian anarchist communists, a group which included Nestor Makhno – a peasant leader who fought the Bolsheviks and the Whites after the Russian revolution – wrote in a similar vein in their *Organisational Platform of the Libertarian Communists* (1926) that

The class struggle created by the enslavement of workers and their aspirations to liberty gave birth, in the oppression, to the idea of anarchism: the idea of the total negation of a social system based on the principles of classes and the State, and its replacement by a free non-statist society of workers under self-management. So anarchism does not derive from the abstract reflections of an intellectual or a philosopher, but from the direct struggle of workers against capitalism, from the needs and necessities of the workers, from their aspirations to liberty and equality...

The outstanding anarchist thinkers, Bakunin, Kropotkin and others, did not invent the idea of anarchism, but, having discovered it in the masses, simply helped by the strength

is now a dirty word. In the sense it is used by anarchist communists, it does not mean a police state, or a barracks style socialism, or state capitalism (see box); it means a free and voluntary communism.

People think economics has something to do with bosses, accountants, economists, money, the market, profits, production, the division of labour, work or wage-labour. Yet anarchist communists like Kropotkin have a refreshing approach to economics. Capitalists claim that all the things listed above like money and the market are natural, and it is impossible to have anything else. Yet they are just stuff made up by capitalists, like a veil to cover reality. Lift the veil, and what we have in reality is human beings, with their multiplicity of needs and wants that ought to be satisfied.

Anarchist communism is human-centred and not otherworldly. Anarchist communists do not look to God (if it exists) or politicians or bureaucrats to change society, but instead to people themselves. Thus anarchist communism's approach to economics is to refuse to engage it on its own terms. We don't need to talk of money and the market and so on, we instead need to talk of the economic means for the *satisfaction of the needs of all human beings* with the least possible waste of energy to achieve them. Instead of the vague and ambiguous aim of some socialists to "the right to work", anarchist communists aim for "the right to well-being" (that is, the satisfaction of physical, creative and other needs).

But to satisfy these needs, we need to re-organise society. We need to have a revolution to abolish all classes & wage-labour. Anarchist communists reject the market, money, and profit as both exploitative and unnecessary. Instead, we need a society of common, voluntary agreement to meet these shared needs and wants. Thus if we solve the social problems of hierarchy and inequality, then "economics" dissolves into a series of practical questions (how to produce a luxurious standard of living for all with a minimum of labour time; how to make production as safe, clean, and fun as possible; how best to integrate industry and agriculture, how best to integrate manual labour with intellectual labour etc.).

There are two aspects to communism. The first is the taking into possession of all of the wealth of the world, on behalf of the whole of humanity, because that wealth is the collective work of humanity. "All belongs to all". This revolution is

of all resources in common for the well-being of all. The second is organising society around the principle "From each according to their ability, to each according to their needs." This means everything should be produced, distributed and exchanged for free according to need. Everyone would be the judge of their own needs and take for free from the common storehouse whatever they needed. If there was scarcity, things would be rationed according to need. One of the reasons the abolition of money is a necessity is because there can be no exact measure of the productive contribution of every individual, as production today is so interwoven. These two aspects of



communism are intimately related: common possession of the necessities of production requires the common enjoyment of the fruits of production. The abolition of property requires the abolition of the wage system. Retaining some form of private property or monetary exchange would lead to the re-establishment of classes and the state. As Kropotkin noted, "the Revolution, we maintain, must be communist; if not, it will be drowned in blood, and have to begun over again."

Communism is not some impractical dream. Even in today's capitalist society, we have public bridges, beaches, roads, parks, museums, libraries and piped water (at least in some cities) which are free for anybody to use according to their needs. For example, the librarian does not ask you what your previous services to society have been before they get you a book from the shelves or stacks. Again, these are token examples which give us a glimpse of what is possible under a classless and moneyless society.

it was state capitalism, not communism!

One of the most common misperceptions about communism is that it means a draconian police state where a small party elite exploit the majority of population, as what happened in the USSR, its Eastern European colonies, and what is happening in China, North Korea and Cuba. There are many theories on just what type of societies the above countries were or are, ranging from libertarian socialist Cornelius Castoriadis' "bureaucratic capitalism", to those of anarchists who claim it was "state capitalist", but all are agreed that those societies are or were capitalist *not* communist.

John Crump lists five criteria for (libertarian forms of) communism: (1) The means of production will be owned and controlled communally, and production will be geared towards satisfying everyone's needs. Production will be for use, and not for sale on the market; (2) Distribution will be according to need, and not by means of buying and selling; (3) Labour will be voluntary, and not imposed on workers by means of a coercive wages system; (4) A human community will exist, and social divisions based on class, nationality, sex or race will have disappeared (5) opposition to all states, even the ones who falsely proclaim themselves to be "workers' states". (Crump, *Non-Market Socialism*, MacMillan, 1987, pp. 42-46). On the basis of this criteria, we can now see that (say) the old USSR run by the Bolshevik elite from 1917 was a class society where the state, market and wage system were retained, enabling a small bureaucratic elite to be able to force the majority of the population to work for them. As a group of council communists said in the 1930s: "The socialisation concept of the Bolsheviks is therefore nothing but a capitalist economy taken over by the State and directed from the outside and above by its bureaucracy. The Bolshevik socialism is state-organised capitalism."

(4) SYNTHESIS: ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

Anarchism and communism are a necessary complement to one another. A synthesis of both are required for a free and equal society. To Kropotkin it is "communism without government, free Communism. It is a synthesis of the two chief aims prosecuted by humanity since the dawn of history – economical freedom and political freedom."

On the one hand, communism needs to be anarchist or else it will become

Tino Rangatiratanga and capitalism

"Ka whawhai tonu matou ake ake" – Rewi Maniapoto 1864.

("We will fight on forever, ever and ever".)

Firstly I'd like to say that this my opinion on what is Tino Rangatiratanga, acknowledging that there are many different meanings for Tino Rangatiratanga and the concept itself is part of a rich and ongoing debate in Maori society. So I think the debate/dialogue/discussion surrounding Tino Rangatiratanga is an organic/dynamic thing so in that vein of thought my own views are also dynamic and changing. So yeah that's all the disclaimer shit out of the way [in case I change my mind : and someone quotes me out of context.]

I feel that no one person has all the answers but that there should be parameters where the korero is contained, so that the korero is relatively in the same 'discussion ball-park'. I also think that some of the issues surrounding Tino Rangatiratanga are for Maori and Maori alone to debate/decide. (How that decision is made is another thing completely). I think there are some aspects of Tino Rangatiratanga that non-Maori can engage on but there are some aspects that are for Maori only. This is consistent with principles of self-determination, meaning it's not self-determination if someone else is determining it for you.

A DEFINITION

A good definition of Tino Rangatiratanga can be found on the Tino Rangatiratanga website. (<http://aotearoa.wellington.net.nz>) The word 'tino' is an intensifier and the word 'rangatiratanga' broadly speaking relates to the exercise of 'chieftainship'. Its closest English translation is self-determination – although many also refer to it as 'absolute sovereignty' or Maori independence. Such a concept embraces the spiritual link Maori have with 'Papatuanuku' (Earthmother) and

is a part of the international drive by indigenous people for self determination.

TINO RANGATIRATANGA FROM BELOW

(as opposed to the courts, parliament, the universities, and other "talking heads".) How this broad definition fits in with what is happening in Maori society, the sorts of parameters it throws up and the extent of those parameters, I think is determined, at the flaxroots level. Treaty principles (and other similar attempts thrown up by this and that government and this and that court and then mulled over by the academics in the learning institutions) have all been reactions to direct action at the flaxroots level. For example the setting up of the Waitangi Tribunal and the establishment of the Maori Language Commission culminated with actions from the 60s, and 70s.

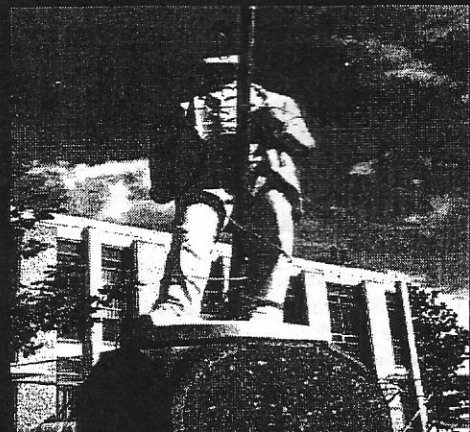
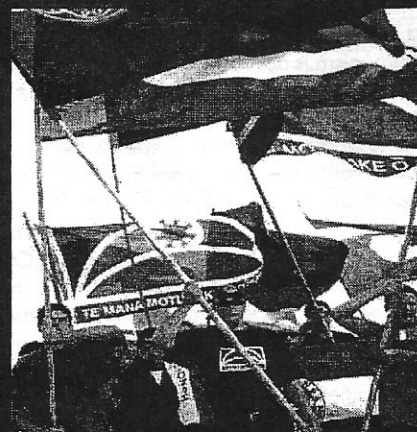
I think the struggle for Tino Rangatiratanga happens on a number of levels, a part of the struggle is the retention and revitalisation of our language and customs. In that sense every volunteer in every kapa haka group and Kohanga reo (and other similar groups) is in some way contributing to the struggle of Tino Rangatiratanga. Where I think the most clarity and direction happens for Tino Rangatiratanga is on the direct action frontline (as opposed to parliament, the courts, the classroom). The 'Movement' has traditionally been an extremely heterogeneous social force encompassing a considerable variety of political strategies, campaigns and participants. But this is where the parameters of Tino Rangatiratanga are set (or not set). Like most movements the Tino Rangatiratanga movement has a tradition and a history. This tradition is rooted in conflicts over the Treaty of Waitangi, Maori resistance in the 'Land Wars', inspired by the Prophet Warriors Titokowaru and Te Kooti Arikirangi, the philosophies of Te Whiti and Tohu

Kakahi, the strategies of the Kingitanga, the resilience of Rua Kenana, and the foresight of Ratana, and those countless ancestors whose blood soaks this land. In the modern context this tradition has been held up by new groups and individuals such as Nga Tamatoa, WAC (Waitangi Action Committee), Te Kowiri, Black Women, Te mana motuhake o Tuhoe, Te Kawau Maro, (the list goes on and on) who in turn drove and were inspired by the Occupations of Bastion Point (Takaparawha), The Land March and the countless Marches on Waitangi, resistance to the infamous fiscal envelope and the Occupations it set off, Pakaitore, Takahue, etc. The establishment of the Tuhoe Embassy, the Occupation of Waikaremoana, resistance to Free Trade and Genetic Engineering. It is here where I think the parameters of Tino Rangatiratanga are debated /digested /formulated.

CAPITALISM AND TINO RANGATIRATANGA COLLIDE IN THE CULTURAL NATIONALIST DIVIDE

(the divide between rich Maori and poor Maori.)

Yup nasty old capitalism. I think that one of the parameters that needs to be set is a Maori based analysis of capitalism. Placing white settler colonisation of Aotearoa within its historical context, it can be seen as a part of the global process of capitalist expansionism based on the destruction of the territorial and cultural integrity of the indigenous populations by the expropriation and commodification of their lands and human resources. From a tikanga perspective capitalism began in Aotearoa with the commodification of Papatuanuku, that is the individualisation of whenua, disrupting the collective connection that Maori had with the whenua. This is the nature of colonisation so the struggle against colonisation is the struggle against capitalism. Capitalism is class struggle, that is, capitalism, by its very



nature, forces people to work for a wage. For example, by stealing communal lands and resources, causing the indigenous peoples who relied on those lands and resources for survival, causing them to move to the cities to work as wage slaves.

The struggle against colonisation and capitalism also has contemporary manifestations, but there are also things that happened relatively recently that we can be learn and build on. The Tino Rangatiratanga movement in the 60s and 70s drew on other social movements of that time period that identified with the left, specifically the Anti-Racist Movement, the Women's Liberation Movement, and the Trade Union Movement (a lot of shit was going down at this time eg the biggest amount of strike activity in the history of colonial New Zealand, the Mangere Bridge lockout in 1978, the Kinleith strike in 1980 etc). The political turbulence of this period culminated (for the Tino Rangatiratanga movement) in the 1975 land march on parliament, Bastion Point, Raglan and the regular protests at Waitangi.

In the 80s, a lot of energy was focused on winning Maori studies and language programmes in the education system. For large parts of the movement the emphasis on the rediscovery of culture came to be the objective of the movement itself and a substitute for practical struggle. Although I think struggle for the revitalisation of te reo Maori and tikanga are good things I think they need to be seen as just a part of the fabric of Tino Rangatiratanga. By focussing on cultural issues this allowed the co-optation of a Maori elite within the structures of the state forced many Maori leaders to straddle the uneasy gulf between pushing the Maori struggle forward and maintaining the existing state of affairs. The prestige and wealth that went with such privileged positions in the settlement process meant that Maori leaders became increasingly removed from the concerns and vitality of the flaxroots Maori struggle. Tino Rangatiratanga could be then seen as economic independence because we were free to enter the 'free market'. Capitalism with a smiley (Maori) face. Bullshit. Watching our rangatiratanga go up and down on the stock exchange is not a good thing, especially if someone flies a plane into it.

Tino Rangatiratanga should be a radically democratic alternative to capitalism in which the flaxroots, local community would be constantly and actively involved in making the key decisions about the allocation of societies resources in a collective, co-operative and open manner rather than behind the closed boardroom doors of large corporations (be they tribal or otherwise). It would involve communities making these important decisions and running the economy and society as a whole on a day-to-day basis. Tino Rangatiratanga should embrace a system in which our entire economy is geared up to satisfy the needs of human beings our tikanga, cultural

the nandor files

Nandor Tanzcos was an anarchist before taking on his current occupation of co-opting youth dissent as a Green Party MP and hippy

capitalist co-owner of the Hemp Store in Auckland.

When Nandor was editor of University of Waikato student paper *Nexus* in 1989, he published an article called "Anarchism and the Real World" (17 July 1989, pp. 12-13.) Here are a few quotes:

"Anarchists are against the elected dictatorship of parliament, and the whole electoral merry go round. We are for grassroots democracy, with people directly participating in running their own communities and workplaces."

"The anarchism I agree with most is anarcho-syndicalism ('syndicalism' meaning revolutionary unionism). This has nothing to do with 'worshipping the past'. Anarcho-syndicalism, to me, is organised anarchism, libertarian socialism. Rather than sit back and wait for 'The Revolution', or retreat into safe anarchist ghettos, anarcho-syndicalism was born when anarchists got their hands dirty in the day-to-day class war – as agitators, educators, and organisers."

"Real change will never occur on the say-so if smiling judges, top cops or multinational murderers. A free society will only be built on the ruins of class rule and the laws that protect it."

"Anarchists are against rulers...class society and domination in general. As

such we're against 'vanguard politics' – that belief that in a separate class or group of leaders (the vanguard) who are destined to 'lead the masses'. People



aren't Party fodder to be called up to fight, applaud, roll over and beg – all to order. No-one is fight to rule another. All of us (near enough) are capable of taking control of own lives. Because we don't believe in worshipping leaders doesn't mean we believe in sitting back and waiting for miracles to happen. We know...what we believe in, and should be prepared to act... 'We are all leaders'. That's how it should be, everyone prepared to 'give a lead' where possible. No-one a passive sheep."

"Anarchism is seen, in practice, to be the most militant and practical section of the working class movement."

"Anarchism is not a game. It's a movement based on the class struggle, against class society, for the liberation of all humanity. Its nothing to do with 'being nice' or tolerating the intolerable because 'anything goes'. Or anything to do with the way you dress. It is not a pose, and not a 'youthful phase' to be grown out of. It is not liberalism spelt with an 'a'."

as kaitiaki, guardians of the earth and the eco-system. It would be based on a vision of society free of racism, class exploitation, women's oppression, homo-phobia and the oppression of indigenous peoples.

This helps us to understand the nature of Maori corporations, corporate warriors, the brown table, tribal capitalists, who by cashing in the momentum created by Tino Rangatiratanga advocates, have managed cash up generations of Maori struggle for only a small fraction of what the land, fisheries and other resources were worth (and for some Maori assigning a \$\$ value to Papatuanuku or Tangaroa is obscene). Tino Rangatiratanga needs to be rescued from corporate warriors, tribal executives and Maori businesses along with the ideologues of the New Right to define Tino Rangatiratanga in a way that seriously threatens the living standards of the vast majority of working class Maori whanau.

I think a way of acting on all of this is recognising that the struggle for Tino Rangatiratanga is part of a broader international struggle simply because the system that we're fighting against is an

leathers looking like Black Panthers). Our struggle against capitalism depends on building a movement that has an organic connection with Aotearoa and an analysis of the system here. It is simply dangerous to assume that what happens in Britain or Europe can be simply applied to NZ. While there are broader trends that are the same, we need an indigenous analysis of class struggle and capitalism in NZ not the borrowed writings of British authors applied mindlessly and indiscriminately to a country 12,000 miles away. The Polynesian populace is overwhelmingly working class (for those of us lucky enough to have a job)...our values and outlook are not the same as British workers. We need to build an indigenous analysis and political strategy that relates to the realities of surviving capitalism in our own little part of the world.
– Teanau Tuiono.

Good shit to read about the same kaupapa: The Evolution of Contemporary Maori Protest <http://aotearoa.wellington.net.nz/back/tumoana/index.htm> White Settler Colonialism and the Political

continued from page 5

voluntary agreement could easily lead to dictatorship by a minority. Communism needs to be free, non-statist and voluntary from its outset. As Kropotkin noted, "communist organisations cannot be left to be constructed by legislative bodies called parliaments, municipal or communal councils. It must be the work of all, a natural growth, a product of the constructive genius of the great mass. Communism cannot be imposed from above; it could live even for a few months if the constant and daily cooperation of all did not uphold it. It must be free." Communism could not exist without anarchism, without thousands and thousands of voluntary associations formed and reformed to meet people's needs.

On the other hand, anarchism by itself, without communist economic arrangements, would perpetuate class divisions. If private property or money was retained in some form, it would be used by some groups to exploit others. It is futile to speak of political liberty when economic slavery still exists. The abolition of the state requires the abolition of capitalism. Anarchism needs communism because, by satisfying basic human needs such as food and shelter for all, communism provides the material basis for anarchism or political liberty.

Once both capitalism, the wage-system and the state are abolished, individuals will be truly free to develop their own potential as they wish. Anarchist communism aims to produce the greatest amount of individuality combined with the greatest amount of community, and in the process eudaemony and well-being for all.

Now we are in a position to see that many modern anarchists lack any notion of communism, or socialism for that matter. Anarchism to them is reduced to the formation of liberal non-authoritarian groupings, based upon people's subjective tastes. It is seen as a purely anti-authoritarian & anti-governmental idea, rather than an expression of anti-capitalist/anti-statist or communist tendencies in society. On the other hand we see that some modern anarchists, particularly those from Marxist or Leninist backgrounds, tend to see anarchism only in its economic aspects, thus they focus on the class struggle without any notion of non-authoritarian organisation.

(5) MODERN ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

There is a tendency for many anarchists today to see anarchist communism as out of date. It was a product of a society torn by vicious class divisions, but since then, they claim, these divisions are not so clear. This view is absurd. First of all, society today is still based on class exploitation much like 100 years ago, and this exploitation under the neo-liberal or New Right has intensified! Second of all, there is a genuine need to bring class struggle anarchist communism up to date. The working class has changed: the image of a male white blue-collar industrial

ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

working class is now dominated by (casualised) service workers, not industrial factory workers; the majority of the working class is female; and a high proportion of the working class in Aotearoa are Maori and Pacific Islanders. Hence we need to see the struggles of working class Maori, Pacific Islanders (see article on pages 6-7), and working class women as part of the class struggle. The struggle against class exploitation needs to include not only struggles against the boss class but struggles against the things that divide the working class, like sexism and racism. The class struggle is a struggle to liberate all of humanity, not just one particular class or group (that is, it requires the self-abolition of the working class).

One particularly valuable attempt to update anarchist communism comes through the work of American eco-anarchist Murray Bookchin. The ecological crisis means that we must not only seek genuinely democratic methods of production, but only produce things in an ecologically sensible way. Bookchin has formulated an eco-anarchist communism which claims that all forms of hierarchy are interlinked. For example, he claims ecological destruction is rooted in our hierarchical relationships to each other. Eliminate these relationships, and our relationship to nature will be transformed as well. Hence under Bookchin's formulation the struggle is thus to abolish all forms of authority (class, race, gender etc.). The problem with Bookchin is that he rejects the class struggle as the means to abolish authority, and instead places great hope on "new social movements" capturing local body governments through participating in representative elections! This has failed in the past, or ended up with parties that inevitably move to accommodation with the establishment. A non-class approach almost inevitably fails because it does not seek to abolish the exploitative social relations that underlie capitalism. Revolutionary class struggle, as shown to some extent in Argentina today (see back page), is the only means by which anarchist communism can be brought about. Experience shows us that only when the working class becomes conscious of its oppression and acts in a revolutionary manner that abolishing (or to be realistic, minimising to the highest degree possible) all exploitation becomes possible.

Today, many anarchist communist groups around the world are "platformist" in orientation. Platformists rightly contend that anarchist communists need to be organised into coherent, unified groups capable of putting forward well-defined views. However, the problem with platformist groups is that in general they sacrifice the *content* of anarchist communism for a fetishisation of their own organisational *form*, and hence tend to become obsessed with their own internal and external practice, often regardless of the actual level of class struggle in society. They seem to be forever searching for the

While it is excellent that they see anarchist communism as part of the class struggle, often they overlook the necessarily communist (non-market) aspect of anarchist communism, and thus seem to be little more than anarchist collectivists rather than communists.

I believe anarchist communism is not an outdated theory but still has much relevance to today's authoritarian capitalist society. With the rise of a vague anti-capitalist or at least anti-corporate feeling in society, and a general skepticism towards political parties and unions, and increasing questioning of the militaristic state, the prospects for anarchist communism seem good. Anarchist communism is a viable, well thought out alternative to capitalism that goes beyond the vagueness of just being "anti-capitalist". The neo-liberal hegemony over society is somewhat skin-deep: it has forced us to work harder for less pay, reducing our living standards and producing a real disgruntlement with work among many people. Who wants to sacrifice 40 years or more of your life doing something you hate (work) for the profit of someone else?

Yet we need to keep our feet on the ground. Disgruntlement against neo-liberalism has not been translated into positive action against the system much. Across the 'first world', the level of working class resistance to capitalism is at historic lows, if strike activity is anything to go by. Many people are today apathetic, alienated, and individualistic; even if many see through the spectacle of modern capitalism and its hollow promise of happiness through enforced consumption, most do not act against it. Once the level of working class self-activity increases, as it seems to be doing very recently, these attitudes will no doubt change, and radical movements like anarchist communism may suddenly become popular once again.

As well, its main rivals on the left have all but faded away: social democratic parties have collapsed (eg. the Alliance) or transformed themselves into right wing neo-liberal parties (eg. the Labour Party); Stalinists have lost the lure of the USSR; and other Marxist-Lemmingists (Leninists) have been reduced to tiny, irrelevant sects. This collapse of the traditional left offers us an unprecedented opportunity to encourage coherent anarchist communist tendencies among people without power.

— Toby.

FURTHER READING

This article is based upon the non-market anarchist communist theories of Kropotkin. His most important book is *The Conquest of Bread*, which is absolutely essential reading if you are interested in anarchist communism. Other important pamphlets by Kropotkin are his *Anarchist Communism* and his *Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal*. The best overviews of Kropotkin's anarchist communism are in Alain Pengam's "Anarcho-Communism" in *Non-Market Socialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, eds. John Crump and Maximilien Rubel, and John Crump's chapter on anarchist communism in his *History, Strategy and*

anarchist round table aims and principles

WHO WE ARE

The Anarchist Round Table (ART) was formed by a group of Christchurch anarchists in 1997. Since then, ART has been involved in setting up a number of activist and community projects in Christchurch, including the SMOG neighbourhood newspaper and the Beneficiary Action Collective. ART was one of the founding collectives at InterActive, a Christchurch activist centre involving ART, Otautahi IndyMedia, Young Greens and NORML amongst others. Unfortunately InterActive has become recently defunct. ART meets now and then and holds public discussions to inform people about anarchist ideas and practices.

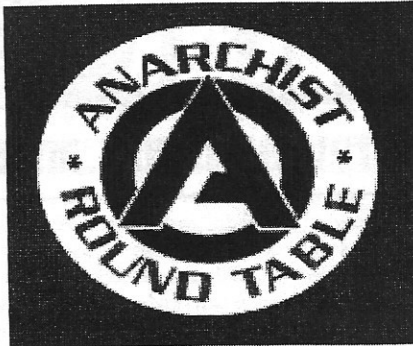
ART promotes revolutionary, class struggle anarchism. We oppose capitalism, the state and all other authoritarian systems. We seek to establish a free society in which each person gives according to their ability and receives according to their need. We believe this can only be achieved through a mass-based revolution that involves the majority of the population, not a small elite group of activists or party members.

1. CRITICISMS OF PRESENT SOCIETY

- We oppose all forms of authority. No one group or individual has the right to rule any other group of individual.
- We oppose all forms of exploitation. We live in a capitalist society, in which a minority (the ruling class) own or controls most of society's resources. These resources have been created over generations by the collective effort of the majority of the population (the working class). Yet most people are forced to work for bosses and receive less than the value of their labour in the form of a salary or wage in return. The bosses then retain the difference in the form of profit. This process is called "class exploitation".
- We oppose all states. The state (government, police, army, judicial system, education system) is not neutral but serves the interest of the ruling class.
- We acknowledge the legacy of colonialism in Aotearoa and support self-determination for Maori.
- We oppose ecologically unsustainable economic growth.

2. STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE

- Means must reflect the ends. If our organisations are authoritarian, racist and sexist we will end up with an authoritarian, racist and sexist society.
- The only group in society capable of fundamentally overthrowing capitalism is the working class. This is because the working class is located at the strategic heart of capitalism: the workplace.



should be to promote among the working class anarchist ideas and ways of organising. We support self-organisation among the working class and do not seek to "lead" anyone.

- We support grassroots, mass-based direct action. Direct action is action taken by people themselves and directed at the source of the problem. It does not rely on the work of intermediaries, such as politicians or union bureaucrats.
- Real change will come only through mass-based revolution that involves the majority of the population. We have no faith in parliamentary politics. Capitalism and the state cannot be reformed, but needs to be abolished.
- We support internationalism. Because capitalism is global, we should organise across national borders in our struggle against it.
- We look forward to a peaceful society. However, we recognise that militant struggle has won many of the freedoms we enjoy today.

3. THE FUTURE ANARCHIST SOCIETY (THE AIM)

- We want a classless, stateless society with no hierarchical or authoritarian structures or systems.

- Society should be based on communal ownership of the resources of society. Decisions about production and distribution should be made by the people themselves in their own workplaces and communities.
- We want self government of our own communities. The people who ought to have the most say in how a community or workplace is run are the people who are actually in the local community or workplace.
- Activities affecting people over a larger areas would be coordinated by federations of autonomous, self governing groups. These federations would not be authoritarian, as they would have no power to enforce their decisions. Membership of these federations would be on a strictly voluntary basis.
- We want a society where the principal "To each according to need, from each according to ability" would be the norm. This can only be achieved with the abolition of money and wage labour.
- We want a society of communal individuality. We want the greatest possible individuality with the greatest possible communality. The free individual is only possible in a free society. Developing individual creativity and fulfilling the potential of every individual is only possible in a classless stateless society where everybody's basic material needs are met. However, we do not want people to develop their own individuality at the expense of others.
- We want an ecologically sensible and sustainable society.

ART MEMBERSHIP

There are no membership fees for joining ART. If you agree with our aims and principles and would like to get involved, just drop us a line at:

ART, PO Box 22-076 Christchurch,
e-mail anroundtable@hotmail.com

thr@ll needs your help!

Like all the best things in life, *thr@ll* is free. But unfortunately we live in a capitalist society so we require money to keep on publishing. We are calling for people to give us donations, either as regular payments, or as a one-off. Sending us some stamps to help with our mailing costs would be very useful as well. Help support Aotearoa's only regular nationwide anarchist publication.

☐ Yes! I would love to give a donation.
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Christchurch, Aotearoa/New Zealand



wildcat

revolutionary anarchist organisation

aims (as at october 2002)

ANTI - CAPITALIST

We aim at a society without classes, inequality, exploitation or oppression of any kind: anarchist communism. Capitalism is a disgusting social system which has nothing to offer humanity except exploitation, alienation, war, and ecological destruction. Capitalism is a society based upon class exploitation, a society in which a minority (the boss or ruling class) owns and controls most of the resources in society, and forces the vast majority of us (the working class, which includes not only wage-workers but also the unemployed and homemakers) to work for their profit. The working class are not only bossed at work, but also manipulated in consumption and leisure.

ANTI - STATIST

We also aim at a society without the state. This means the abolition of national frontiers. The courts and parliament, police and army, exist to protect the interests of the rich and powerful. We know from experience that it is useless to try and reform these institutions by electing representatives to parliament. Neither can they be captured and used in our interests after a revolution. Both simply lead to swapping one form of exploitation for another.

ANTI - AUTHORITARIAN

We also aim at a society organised without any form of authority. Relationships now are based on domination and submission: bosses over workers, men over women, adults over children. We seek to change all of this. We seek not just an economic revolution but one that also frees us in our social and personal relationships. Thus we oppose sexism, racism, homophobia, animal exploitation, and the destruction of the environment. We believe that opposing things like sexism and racism is just as vital as other aspects of the class struggle, for that struggle is the means by which *all* of humanity can be liberated from all forms of exploitation and authority.

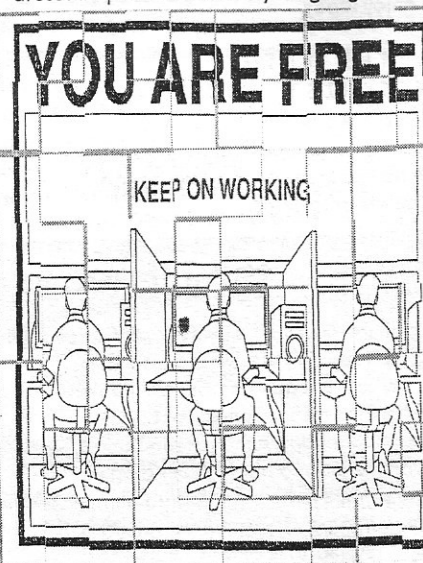
FOR REVOLUTION

Capitalism and the state cannot be reformed, but need to be abolished. The working class is the only class capable of carrying out a revolution against capitalism. It does this through the struggles of the workers themselves, through mass based direct action, not

through an elite group (say) taking to the hills with guns. Direct action means opposing directly the boss class in our workplaces and communities. It also requires that every struggle is controlled by the people concerned and not, for example, by full-time party or union officials.

FOR VOLUNTARY COMMUNISM

We aim at a classless society without commodity production, markets or money, in which production is for human need and all goods are free to everyone. Such a society would be based upon the communal ownership of the resources of society and organised on the principle "from each (voluntarily) according to one's ability, to each according to one's needs" so as to produce well-being for all. There are currently no 'socialist' or 'communist' countries on the planet. The old USSR, China and Cuba are not, and were not, socialist or communist but state capitalist dictatorships. The great bulk of so-called socialists and communists aim at nothing more than a 'radical' version of capitalism, dressed up in revolutionary language.



FOR DIRECT DEMOCRACY

In place of the state, we seek to establish decentralised federations of community and workplace councils. These workers' councils will be run by direct, participatory democracy, where all people will have a genuine and meaningful say in the running of the communities and workplaces they participate in. Delegates would be mandated and recallable. This is in contrast to representative democracy,

where we are expected to vote for a representative who then makes decisions on our behalf.

FOR TINO RANGATIRATANGA

We acknowledge the legacy of colonialism in Aotearoa and support the struggle for Tino Rangatiratanga. We respect the autonomy of Tino Rangatiratanga groups. The boss class has recently created a new Maori capitalist elite in order to try to control working class Maori. The corporate warriors have done little for working class Maori. We believe Tino Rangatiratanga cannot be achieved under capitalism and the state.

OUR ROLE

Wildcat sees its task as both participating in the struggles of today and putting forward genuinely revolutionary methods and ideas. Our role is not to 'organise the working class' nor to take power 'on behalf of the workers' but to participate actively in the generalisation (or deepening and broadening) of working class struggles. If we want to achieve a free classless society, we must organise in the same way. The means that we use must be consistent with the ends we want to achieve. Wildcat rejects equally the idea of creating a party in which a central committee hands down orders to the members and also the disorganisation of many other non-hierarchical activist groups. Our organisation aims to provide an alternative to both. Organisation is necessary because it breaks down our individual isolation, helps us to share our experiences, and to co-ordinate our activities. In this way, each thread of resistance can be gradually woven into a tapestry of revolution and freedom.

Unlike the would-be leaders of the left, we do not seek 'followers' but aim at the creation of a conscious, revolutionary working class – a movement of equals. To these ends, we have public discussions about politics, we produce material explaining our views, and we are active in struggles where we work and live.

CONTACT

Wildcat (formerly Libertarian Communists) c/- PO Box 6387 Te Aro, Wellington.
e-mail: wildcat@clerk.com. We have public discussions once a month in the Peace and Environment Centre, 2nd floor, Trades Hall, 126 Vivian St., Wellington.

bin rubbish privatisation in christchurch

Despite widespread community opposition to the idea when it was first proposed several months ago, the Christchurch City Council recently voted to scrap the issuance of "free" rubbish bags and instead move to a user-pays system for the collection of household rubbish. The change is due to take effect in 2004.

HIGHER RATES PLUS USER CHARGES

Currently the cost of domestic rubbish collection is met by general rates charges, with each household receiving a yearly quota of 52 official CCC rubbish bags. Under the new system, householders would have to buy their rubbish bags, probably from a private supplier, at a price that would include the cost of collection. The introduction of this user-pays system would reportedly save the council \$5 million a year. However, there is to be no corresponding reduction in rates.

Many opposed to the introduction of user-pays have pointed out that it will result in an increase in the illegal dumping of rubbish. But more importantly, the move is regressive in that it will hit hardest those who are already struggling financially, such as those on low incomes, beneficiaries and pensioners. They will be faced with both a rates or rent increase as well as new charges for rubbish collection.

PUBLIC SERVICE OR BUSINESS?

The move to user-pays also represents a step on the road to privatisation. In most

cases of privatisation the first stage has been the introduction of user charges, which increase dramatically each year. Around the globe the process of opening up public utilities to private corporations continues despite the wishes of a majority of the public. This has resulted in large increases in charges, job losses for workers, and people having their water supply and electricity cut because they can't afford to pay the bills.

The privatisation of public services is one of the agendas of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), which originated during the Uruguay Round negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and is currently being promoted by the World Trade Organization (WTO). Included in the agreement are areas such as telecommunications, transport, distribution, postal services, insurance, and most importantly areas like healthcare, education, housing, water and waste management.

Although on the face of it the GATS is an agreement between countries, it is clear that those

governments that are pushing the privatisation agenda are working on behalf of big business, who see the likes of healthcare, education, water and rubbish collection not as essential public services but as potential sources of profit. Overseas and increasingly in New Zealand, the rubbish business is extremely lucrative, with waste multinationals such as Waste Management and Onyx now familiar names around the world.

GREEN SPIN

In Christchurch, the council has attempted to put a positive spin on the proposed changes by characterising them as part of a "green" initiative that will help reduce the amount of waste going to landfills. But why should the public be forced to pay for environmental problems caused by factors largely beyond our control? When we purchase things from the supermarket we have little influence over the type and amount of packaging that comes with them. Surely the responsibility for the cost and disposal of waste lies where waste is produced i.e. with the businesses that produce it. The point of production is where the waste is generated, and that is where the responsibility rests for its reduction – or even better – its elimination.

If the city council was serious about waste minimisation then it would be expanding its existing recycling scheme, which is extremely well utilised. Instead, it has abandoned its policy of achieving zero waste by 2020. It is also one of the driving agents behind the

huge new regional landfill planned for Kate Valley near Waipara.

A LIFESTYLE CHOICE?

In attempting to blame individuals and households for the environmental problem of waste, the council's logic fits nicely with much of what passes as "environmentalism" here in Aotearoa, i.e. the idea that our environmental problems result from and can be solved by the lifestyle "choices" of individuals. By telling us that we are all equally to blame for the state of the environment, those responsible are distracting us from the real causes of pollution and the systems that produce it. In reality it is the capitalist mode of production, which places profits before the welfare of both people and the planet, that is the single largest cause of the

environmental degradation that is inflicting the earth. Only by changing that system will we ever move towards a more ecological and just future.

Of course the move to user-pays and the privatisation of public services such as waste disposal are not inevitable. From the people in Cochabamba, Bolivia who successfully reversed the privatisation of their water supply, to the campaigns against user-pays water and waste services in Ireland, to the efforts of the Water Pressure Group here in Aotearoa it has been shown that mass resistance and direct action can halt the user-pays and privatisation agendas in their tracks.

GET INVOLVED!

Here in Otago, moves are underway to launch a similar campaign to fight the proposed changes and keep rubbish bags "free" to the public. Anyone interested in getting involved can contact the campaign organisers at Keep Rubbish Bags Free, c/o Box 13-874, Christchurch.

Quote of the month:

"Meaningful action, for revolutionaries, is whatever increases the confidence, the autonomy, the initiative, the participation, the solidarity, the equalitarian tendencies and the self-activity of the masses and whatever assists in their demystification. Sterile and harmful action is whatever reinforces the passivity of the masses, their apathy, their cynicism, their differentiation through hierarchy, their alienation, their reliance on others to do things for them and the degree to which they can therefore be manipulated by others – even by those allegedly acting on their behalf."

Solidarity, As We See It (1967).



how to fire your boss

review of *how to fire your boss & industrial workers of the world frequently asked questions* (dunedin: dunedin industrial workers of the world, 2001).

This little pamphlet is a good introduction to various forms of workers' direct action against capitalism. It outlines various methods which have been successfully used by workers against bosses, from sabotage to slowdowns to work-to-rule to sick ins and so on. My favourite is the "Good Work Strike" where disgruntled workers provide their services to the public for free. For example, bus and tram operators let all passengers on for free. As the pamphlet mentions, all the above tactics depend upon collective organisation and solidarity for their success. "Individual acts of sabotage offer little more than a fleeting sense of revenge."

The second part of the pamphlet is a basic introduction to the IWW union – a syndicalist grassroots union.

It is available from either the Dunedin IWW (P.O. Box 5407 Dunedin) or the Freedom

Ten months ago the Argentinean working class rose up and seriously threatened the power of the state – five governments were brought down in three weeks and momentum was building for more widespread resistance. Since then though, it all seems to have gone quiet – if you believed the capitalist press anyway. The reality is very different however – the uprising continues and has, if anything, taken on a more determined character. The rebellion has been a reaction to the economic crisis which the banks, the capitalist monopolies, the IMF, the US Treasury and Argentinean politicians have tried to place on the backs of the working class. This has resulted in massive poverty, about 50% unemployment, and starvation. The uprising can be split into five different aspects.

(1) POPULAR ASSEMBLIES

The popular assemblies now number over 150 all over Argentina. They meet on corners and in occupied buildings in every neighbourhood, and support the struggles of the working class: they support strike action in their neighbourhood, they prevent evictions from taking place, they demand, and get, medical supplies for hospitals from besieged monopoly laboratories, in short, they attempt to take into their own hands the finding of solutions for the working people living in the neighbourhood. They also support workers who occupy their factory (facing down successfully the attempted police evictions) when the bosses feel they have squeezed everything out of the workers they can, and have attempted to close down the factory. Popular Assemblies are run by face-to-face direct democracy rather than representative democracy. The Popular Assemblies have had two national assemblies.

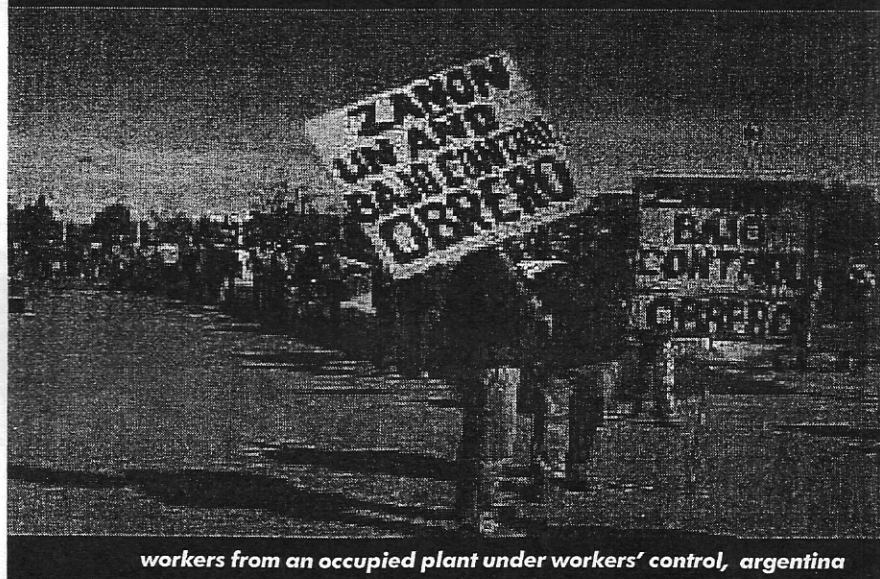
(2) OCCUPIED FACTORIES

A whopping 1200 workplaces have been occupied by workers. The plan of struggle voted June 22-23 calls for the occupation and placing into production by the workers themselves of every factory that fires its workers or attempts to close, and that is what the workers are doing, in larger and larger numbers. For example the Brukman textile plant in Buenos Aires has been occupied since December 18th 2001 when the boss fled owing months of wages. Hired goons were sent to take back the plant but were met with physical resistance by the workers and piqueteros – which helped to develop practical solidarity. Activity has recently shifted to establishing link-ups between the unemployed piqueteros and the occupying workers.

This has been demonstrated in a series of National Conferences, the latest of which took place on Sept 28th of plants and factories producing under

ARGENTINA UPRISING!

popular rebellion continues in argentina



workers from an occupied plant under workers' control, argentina

workers' control – attended by workers and delegates of the piqueteros and the "combative anti-bureaucratic" trade unions. Nearly every industry was represented – miners from Río Turbio, Grissinópolis bakers, the Junín Clinic of Córdoba, Tigre Supermarkets in Rosario, to teachers' occupying School Boards in La Plata, Berisso and Ensenada. San Juan, Tucuman, Entre Rios, Cordoba, El Jagüel, Floresta, Chilaverit have all seen occupations – and this trend is rapidly spreading throughout the country. These workplaces under workers' control have often demanding to expropriate the banks to pay for working capital.

(3) THE PIQUETEROS

The piqueteros (picketeers) have formed gigantic assemblies at roadblocks, and win reforms by attacking the bosses property. They have joined together in regional and national assemblies. There was a national assembly of employed and unemployed workers of June 22-23 with 1000 delegates from all over the country. The Polo Obrero, a leading piquetero organisation, is now deepening that organisation, opening more than 150 public soup kitchens.

The National Picketeer Bloc has established links with other groups especially the MIJD (Independent Movement of Pensioners and the Unemployed) and Barrios de Pie (Neighbourhoods on their Feet), and the CTD Aníbal Verón (Coordinator of Unemployed Workers). Each groups militancy encourages the others – statements like "we repudiate the electoral trap which proposes that 'All of them must go' so that all of them remain...and we place no confidence in those who say that the social crisis...is to be resolved with a

change in government" are accurate reflections of the mood of these groupings.

(4) BARTER CLUBS

There are presently around 8,000 Clubes de Treque (Barter Clubs) in Argentina. As 70% of Argentineans can only afford essentials, 10 million people participate in barter clubs across Argentina. Does this signal a possible beginning of the end for the market economy and instead production, distribution and exchange for free according to one's needs? Probably not, as these clubs use a different form of money (creditos) for exchange, and there has even been speculation on the creditos! Nevertheless the creation of massive barter networks signals that the capitalist economy is not providing basic needs.

(5) RADICAL TRADE UNIONS

The need to kick out the trade union bureaucracy, who are agents of the boss class is also progressing. A number of 'combative anti-bureaucratic' trade unions have been formed. For example, workers of the fisheries industry in Mar del Plata mobilized against the bosses and kicked out (literally) the bureaucracy from the union.

Overall, the importance of autonomous class action and the value of establishing links with other working class groups in struggle is evident here – there's a lesson for workers here – rely on your collective strength and solidarity – not on union bureaucrats whinging about legality and protecting their assets.

Sources: Anarchist Federation resistance no. 42 Oct 2002 and postings to Argentina Solidarity e-mail list, esp from Vicente Balvanera.